
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 March 2026 21:12
To: Planning
Subject: Objection letter for DC/26/0266
Attachments: Screenshot_20260317_210119_Photos.jpg; Screenshot_20260317_210235_Photos.jpg; Screenshot_20260317_210223_Photos.jpg; Screenshot_20260317_210420_Gallery.jpg; Screenshot_20260317_210305_Photos.jpg; Screenshot_20260317_210448_Gallery.jpg; Thakeham-flooding.jpg; Screenshot_20260317_210731_Photos.jpg; Screenshot_20260317_210855_Photos.jpg

Categories: Comments Received

I wish to object to this application on the grounds that the scale and form of the proposed development is inappropriate for Thakeham, which is classified by Horsham District Council as a small village with limited services, infrastructure, and capacity for further expansion.

Bellway's consultation process lacked meaningful engagement. Residents were given only three or four days' notice of the community consultation session. Although Bellway stated that letters were posted to all Thakeham residents, no letters were delivered to any household in Massey Close. Many residents, including myself, only became aware of the consultation via a Facebook post from the community hub.

The application claims strong attendance at the consultation, but this is misleading; most people attended to complain about the ongoing flooding and unresolved issues in phase 3 of the Abingworth development, not to support this new scheme.

The previously rejected plan proposed 247 homes. Although this new application reduces the number to 150, it still does not address any of the reasons for the original refusal. The development remains out of scale for the village and provides no clear community benefit. There is also no evidence or guarantee that further phases would not follow, as happened at Abingworth Meadows.

The proposed elevation changes are vague and concerning. The developer has not stated how much the land will be raised, and this omission has serious implications for visual impact, overshadowing, and the character of the area.

The proposed layout includes a 2–2.5 metre separation between the rear boundaries of Massey Close and the new homes. This is wholly inadequate. At ground level, the proximity alone poses a significant privacy issue. With the unknown level of proposed land elevation, the impact could be far more severe, resulting in properties overlooking our gardens and windows.

Raising the land and placing homes behind Massey Close will also result in substantial loss of evening sunlight. Our gardens would fall into shadow for much of the summer due to the height and positioning of these new properties.

A green buffer space is shown to the south of the site. It is unclear why this could not have been used as a protective buffer between our homes and the development, helping maintain privacy, reduce noise and dust, and preserve the character of Massey Close.

The existing road network in Thakeham is already overstretched and in poor condition. The Parish Council's 2023 traffic survey confirmed significant road-safety issues, leading to proposed traffic-calming measures; yet these address safety, not congestion.

The development would generate years of heavy-goods vehicle traffic for demolition and construction. Storrington Road is narrow, poorly maintained, and includes sharp blind bends. More HGV movements will create serious risks for all road users and accelerate road deterioration.

Thakeham's infrastructure is already insufficient for its current population. Thakeham Primary School recently received 82 applications for 15 places, demonstrating that local services cannot support additional families.

Residents of Massey Close would be directly exposed to years of demolition and construction activity, including noise, dust, and vibration. I have worked from home permanently for six years; this would have a serious impact on my health, wellbeing, and ability to work.

Bellway has already subjected the village to more than a decade of disruption at Abingworth Meadows. Many of the issues from that development, especially flooding, are still unresolved today. It is unreasonable to impose another lengthy, high-impact development on a small close directly adjacent to demolition works, as well as on the wider small village.

The development offers nothing to the community, fails to address the recognised weaknesses listed in the Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan, and contributes to an already disproportionate level of development relative to the village's size and capacity.

Massey Close already experiences flooding. Placing a large, elevated development uphill from our homes poses a serious risk of increased run-off, waterlogging, and potential property damage. The problems seen at Abingworth Meadows remain unresolved, yet a new site is being proposed with similar characteristics and insufficient drainage detail.

The buildings scheduled for demolition contain asbestos. These structures are approximately 30 metres from our homes and gardens. The application does not detail how Bellway will ensure safety, prevent contamination, or compensate residents for garden cleaning, property damage, or loss of use during demolition.

The ecological impact assessment notes dormice and multiple bat species but minimises the risk to them. Both species are legally protected. Demolition of buildings known to house protected species is likely to cause disturbance or displacement. Additionally, I hold years of photographic and observational evidence of Black Redstarts on the site, a Schedule 1 protected species, but this is not referenced in the ecological report.

The air-quality assessment identifies medium- and high-risk areas for dust but does not explain how these risks will be mitigated. This is unacceptable for a site situated so close to existing homes.

The proposal presents significant, unaddressed flood risks for Massey Close. Elevating the land directly behind our homes will push water downhill onto our properties. The lack of detail around drainage, attenuation measures, and long-term water-management systems is extremely concerning.

Thakeham's infrastructure, roads, school places, utilities, public transport, and community facilities, is already classified as inadequate in the Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan (2017–2031). The weaknesses listed in the Plan include:

- Poor public transport
- Poor cycling/walking links

- Deteriorating natural environment
- Loss of local landscape quality
- Limited green-space ownership
- Poor infrastructure (roads, power, water)
- Sunken lanes restricting road improvements

None of these issues are addressed or mitigated by the proposed development.

The application includes an area of land described as being “gifted” to the Community Land Trust (CLLT). However, residents cannot reasonably support this as a community benefit because its intended use has not been defined.

At the Thakeham Parish Council meeting on 24th February, the CLLT stated that they had no detailed information about the proposal. When asked directly by myself whether the land would be used for additional housing, a representative confirmed that yes, it would. This raises legitimate concerns that the land could enable further phased development.

It is also important to note that during the previous planning application, the CLLT strongly objected to development on this site. In fact, the CLLT was originally formed specifically to oppose housing on this land, and I was a member of the group at that time. The contrast between their previous position and their silence on the current application is striking, particularly given that Bellway is now offering the CLLT a parcel of land.

Without a legally binding, transparent explanation of how the land will be used, and guarantees preventing future residential development, this “gift” cannot be considered a legitimate community benefit or given any planning weight.

Policy Thakeham1 states that new development should be confined to the existing built-up area boundaries and must not undermine the spatial strategy of the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan makes it clear that:

- Thakeham has already taken 221 new dwellings since 2011 — a 32% increase, far exceeding its proportional share.
- The community specifically stated they wanted no further major housing, only small infill sites.

The Neighbourhood Plan states unequivocally that there is “no justification for Thakeham to accommodate any further significant development” outside the settlement boundary. This proposal is therefore fundamentally contrary to the adopted Plan.

Policy Thakeham1 requires protection of the green gap between settlements. This development erodes that gap and undermines a key spatial priority of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The proposal directly conflicts with Objective 8 and Policy Thakeham14, as it threatens natural drainage patterns, increases run-off, and risks significant downstream flooding to Massey Close, an area already known to flood. The proposal fails to comply with Policy Thakeham6, which requires development to reflect local scale, height, and character. The elevated platform and proximity to Massey Close would cause unacceptable overlooking, loss of light, and visual dominance.

The Neighbourhood Plan already allocated land for specific controlled uses (e.g., Thakeham Tiles, Abingworth). The current proposal represents additional speculative development pressure that the Plan explicitly seeks to prevent.

For all the reasons outlined above—flood risk, environmental impact, overdevelopment, lack of infrastructure, inadequate consultation, privacy concerns, road safety, and conflict with the Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan—I request that Horsham District Council refuses this planning application.

The development poses significant harm to the residents of Massey Close and the wider village of Thakeham, with no meaningful community benefit to outweigh that harm.

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